

# **Fact Sheet: U.S. Embassy to Send Election Observers to Aceh**



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*"...in Asia, as in every region of the world, the advance of freedom leads to peace. The advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country."*

-- President George W. Bush  
November 6, 2003

The December 11, 2006 provincial election will be the first free, democratic election in Aceh, made possible by the conclusion of the Helsinki peace agreement between the GAM separatists and the Indonesian government on August 15, 2005. It is vital that the election in Aceh be conducted fairly, and that the results are accepted by both the Acehnese and the Indonesian people as a whole. The United States supports this important step.

- The passage of the Law on the Governance of Aceh in August, 2006 opened the way for this election, in which national and local political parties as well as independent candidates will field candidates. The election is particularly significant because former GAM combatants will participate.
- The U.S. Embassy in Jakarta intends to provide 36 official U.S. Government personnel to observe the casting and tabulating of ballots across 11 of Aceh's 21 districts.
- The U.S. team will coordinate with the EU and other countries which are sending official monitors, as well as with the Indonesian government, to ensure optimal distribution of election observers.
- USAID is providing training for election administrators on election-day procedures as well as conducting an audit to identify and resolve voter registration problems prior to the election.